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AS IT STOOD IN

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MACHIAVELLI.

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By Philip Francis

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MACHIAVELLI.

FOR all the uſeful and honourable purpoſes of national power, many circumſtances contributed to give us the lead of Europe, while the French revolution was depending. In the year 1792, we might have dictated a pacification to the contending parties; or, if that failed, a well-ordered and a well-armed neutrality would have kept us in peace. The riches of the world would have flowed into this iſland, not only from the ſources of its own commerce, improving and undiſturbed, but even from the calamities of other nations. The peculiar advantages of that fortunate ſituation were too obvious to be miſtaken. In departing from it, the miniſter could have no juſtification, but direct and irreſiſtible neceſſity. To preſerve ſuch advantages, punctilios and formalities ſhould have been diſregarded, and every diſpoſition, to explain and accommodate any ſerious cauſe of offence, ſhould have been accepted and encouraged. The guilt of the war, if it was voluntary, is to be meaſured, as all criminal actions are, by its effects. When things are well, it is the buſineſs and duty of the executive government to keep them ſo. Great and certain poſſeſſion is not to be hazarded for precarious acquiſition; much leſs are ſafety and happineſs to be a ſubject of experiment. The actual ſtate

of England is the result of other maxims. The difficulties of the country have evidently grown with its exertions; and now we are called upon for efforts and contributions, which indicate a crisis of imminent danger, to be averted by the wisdom, or repelled by the vigour of the present Administration. Whether the conduct and successes of the war furnish a rational ground of confidence in their abilities, is a question open to the understanding of all men. That, which touches their integrity, is not so easily determined, nor by the same sort of evidence. But it is, if possible, more important, and cannot be reviewed too often, or canvassed too minutely. Under *any* administration, the spirit of the people is sufficient to repel and defeat a direct attack. If it were possible for the enemy to land in force, a great deal of transitory mischief would ensue; but, sooner or later, they must perish in the attempt. This is not by any means the most discouraging view of our situation. A war prolonged without action or enterprise, an invasion threatened and suspended, and the expectation of it continually hanging over us, are the surest, and, for the enemy themselves, the safest instruments to accomplish the ruin of England. In the nature of things, this plan, if they adhere to it, cannot fail. To talk of expecting moderation and candour from a government provoked by injury and incensed by insults, to call them traitors and assassins, and in the same breath to reproach them with arrogance and treachery, as if the character and the qualities were incompatible, is mere folly and impertinence. The serious question is, not whether these people are good or bad, but by what means we are ever to be at peace with them. Then comes the importance of an inquiry into the principles and proceedings of our own government, as far as that of France has been affected by them. If the result of it should lead to a conclusion, morally

rally certain, that the Directory will never treat with them but as with rancorous enemies, and as the wilful authors of all the calamities of France, it follows of neceſſity that other men ought to be tried; unleſs it be contended, that the removal of ſuch perſons is too great a price to pay for the ſalvation of the country.

His Majeſty's miniſters affirm that, in 1793, the war was juſt and neceſſary on the part of Great Britain; and that, in 1796 and 1797, their endeavours to make peace, and to renew the intercourſe with France, were ſerious and ſincere. On the other ſide it is aſſerted, that both theſe propoſitions may be falſe, but that both of them cannot be true, unleſs it can be proved that, in 1796, the character of the war was altered by events, which made the continuance of it, on its original principles, unjuſt and unneceſſary. The iſſue to be tried is, whether the miniſtry did all they could at firſt to avoid the war, and, at laſt, to put an end to it.

On the 18th of June, 1792, Monſieur Chauvelin, in the name of Louis the Sixteenth, invited his Majeſty to "find ſome means to put a ſtop to the "progreſs of a confederacy againſt France, which "threatened the peace, the liberty, and the hap-"pineſs of Europe." In return to this amicable appeal to his Majeſty's wiſdom, friendſhip, and good faith, he was informed that "His Majeſty "thought that, in the exiſting circumſtances of "the war then begun, the interpoſition of his "councils, or of his good offices, could be of no "uſe, unleſs it was deſired by *all* the parties con-"cerned." The pretence is weak and inſufficient; but it proves the diſpoſition. When *all* the parties in a war agree to deſire the interpoſition of a neutral power, no friendly offices are wanted to bring them back to a pacific temper. Peace is almoſt as good as made, when *all* the contending parties are

 diſpoſed

diſpoſed to deſire it. The obvious duty of a common friend, the true policy of a generous, or even of a prudent government, is to employ its good offices, and to exert its influence with thoſe powers, which may be leſs inclined to views of moderation, to encourage and promote a pacific diſpoſition, and to favour that party, which ſeems the readieſt to liſten to reaſonable overtures, and to make conceſſions for the benefit of general accommodation. Such were the wiſe and honourable duties of England, when his Majeſty's mediation was ſolicited and refuſed.

On the 27th of December 1792, Lord Grenville charged the French Convention with having paſſed a decree *calculated to encourage diſcord and revolt in every country*. The French miniſtry denied and diſclaimed the ſenſe attributed to the decree, and, in the ſtrongeſt terms, diſavowed any intention, on the part of France, to act on the principles imputed to that government. When no act has been done, and when nothing but a ſuppoſed principle, or general diſpoſition is complained of, an expreſs diſavowal of ſuch principle and denial of ſuch intention ought to be accepted; becauſe it is all that the caſe admits of. A miniſter, who had ſeriouſly meant to preſerve peace, would have allowed them to know their own meaning, even tho' he had diſtruſted their ſincerity. Inſtead of that, he ſays drily, " I cannot conceal " from you, that I have found nothing ſatisfactory " in the reſult of your note, and we ſhall continue " our preparations."

On the 31ſt December 1792, he tells Monſieur Chauvelin, who had taken the ſtile of *Miniſter Plenipotentiary of France*, " that his letters of credence " were from the Moſt Chriſtian King, and that he " could not be admitted to treat with the King's " Miniſters in the quality he had aſſumed."

On the 7th of January 1793, Monſieur Chauvelin appears

appears to have addressed two memorials to Lord Grenville. In the first he complains, and demonstrates beyond all possibility of reply, that the Alien Bill, moved by his Majesty's Ministers and depending in Parliament, and not making any exception in favour of France, was a direct violation of the Commercial Treaty concluded in 1786, by which it was stipulated, "that the subjects and inhabitants of "the two countries should have liberty to pass and "repass freely and securely, without licence or pass-"port," &c. and that this proposed law, under a general term of designation, was principally directed against the French.

In the second he represents that ships, freighted with corn for France, were stopt by order of Government, and that, when the prohibition was taken off generally, as far as regarded *foreign* wheat, it was still inforced against France, and against France alone. These complaints were supported by arguments in detail, which it would have been difficult to answer in the same form. But that, which cannot easily be answered, may very easily be slighted. Lord Grenville returns the first of these memorials, in a note of six lines, *as totally inadmissible.* Why? Because Monsieur Chauvelin assumes a character, which is not acknowledged. To the substance of the second memorial he returns no answer at all. Why? First, "because it had been thought pre-"ferable in France *to bring forward difficulties of* "*form.*" Secondly, "because he did not know, "in what character Monsieur Chauvelin addressed "him." An objection to a diplomatic character, when there is no doubt of the authority, is a difficulty of form and nothing else, and very unfit to be insisted on in so great and grave a question as that of involving two nations in the miseries of war. The language of power may be laconic; and they, who cannot resist, must submit to it. But such

answers

anſwers between equals are not to be endured. The noble Lord has been taught to lengthen his monoſyllables. The proviſions of the Alien Bill are in direct and evident contradiction to the Commercial Treaty. Do his Majeſty's Miniſters mean to ſay that a treaty, concluded by the Crown, may be annulled by a ſubſequent Act of Parliament? If it may, in the firſt place no foreign power is ſafe in treating with the Crown; and then what right have we to deny that the French Directory may be reſtrained by a previous act of their conſtitution from making particular conceſſions, or to affirm, as we have done, "that there exiſted a *droit public* in "Europe, paramount to any *droit public* they might "think proper to eſtabliſh in their own domi-"nions *?"

On the 20th of January 1793, Lord Grenville poſitively refuſed to receive his new credentials from the Republic, and on the 24th, ſent him an order to quit the kingdom.

Very early in that year the French were humbled by a variety of reverſes and diſaſters, and ready to ſubmit to any terms for an accommodation with England. On the 30th of January, another Miniſter Plenipotentiary (Monſieur Maret) arrived in England. It is not certain that his offers and ſubmiſſions were liſtened to at all; but it was ſaid that they were rejected as incompatible with the honour and dignity of the Engliſh nation to accept; and, on the 4th of February, he was ordered to quit the kingdom in three days. In the beginning of April, Monſieur le Brun, Miniſter for Foreign Affairs, wrote to Lord Grenville, to deſire a paſſport for a perſon veſted with full powers to terminate all differences with Great Britain. Of this requeſt no ſort of notice was taken. Short-ſighted pride makes no

* Lord Malmeſbury, December 20, 1796.

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proviſion for the returning days of humiliation and repentance. When pacific offers and ſolicitations are neglected, or anſwered only with formalities, you may be ſure that the cavillers have taken their reſolution. The motives and the arguments *follow* the inclination.

In December 1792, the French, having got poſſeſſion of the greater part of Flanders, reſolved to ſend ſome of their veſſels up the Scheld to attack Antwerp. How this act was received by the Britiſh Government is freſh in the memory of all men. If the French had ſent a fleet into the Thames, the outcry raiſed againſt them could not have been more violent. Nobody could endure it, but the Dutch themſelves, who ſhewed no ſign of life, and were very unwilling that we ſhould meddle with their affairs. They had no anxiety about the navigation of the Scheld. What they really dreaded was our interpoſition and aſſiſtance. We forced it upon them, we drove them into the war, and we accompliſhed their deſtruction.

But it was ſaid that the real ſources of the war lay deeper than in any offences or provocation of this ſort; that other cauſes of difference might have been accommodated, but that French principles were never to be tolerated or forgiven, much leſs to be admitted among us. While all manner of topics and pretences were taken in aid of the main argument, the avowed predominant purpoſe of the war was to reſiſt the propagation of *principles deſtructive of all order and ſociety*, and, above all things, to prevent their introduction into England. On this ground, the war was uniformly maintained to be what Miniſters called juſt and neceſſary—a common technical character, equally and invariably given, by all parties, to all wars of their own making. War is not to be undertaken or defended on general principles of juſtice, much leſs of expediency. One

nation

nation has no jurisdiction over another. In making war, necessity, and nothing else, constitutes justice. The opprobrious language, with which this policy was inforced, is neither possible to be forgotten, nor very likely to be forgiven by the French. Even to this hour it is not abandoned. In the speeches of the King's principal Ministers, and of all their adherents, the French Government, under every change it has experienced, was and is a collection of robbers, traitors, and assassins, incapable of maintaining the relations of peace and amity with their neighbours, and therefore properly the objects of vengeance and extermination, rather than of legitimate war. Such language, though it were true, would do no credit to the wisdom of those who use it. A prudent Minister, a statesman, with any experience of the uncertainty of human affairs, should have supposed the possibility of a reverse, and not have shut the door against future reconciliation. Neither is it honourable, or even safe for a great nation to treat at all with impious robbers, parricides, and assassins. But, while Ministers gave way to this imprudent passion, and indulged themselves in such rash and useless invectives, is it quite clear that they were in earnest? Did they then, do they now believe that the same Government, to which they have repeatedly offered a project of "perpetual "peace, of sincere and constant friendship, of reci-"procal amity and intercourse," was nothing but a faithless band of traitors and murderers? Has there been any change in the principles of these people? Is it true that they have asked pardon of God and man for their manifold offences? If not, why are their principles less dangerous *now*, when they are crowned and confirmed by success, when even we acknowledge that they have at last produced a Government fit for the King of Great Britain to treat with, than they were in 1793? The parties and

and the principles were the ſame. Lord Malmeſbury was not inſtructed to object to the one, or to proteſt againſt the other. Both the negotiations broke off on queſtions of profit and loſs, not on principles. In all the diſpatches of the two embaſſies, there is not a ſingle word about morality or religion, nor even of that obnoxious doctrine, which was to occaſion revolt and diſorder in every country. If the French would have relinquiſhed Flanders in 1796, or the Cape and Ceylon in 1797, we ſhould have heard no more of their morals or their crimes. By offering to compound with ſuch principles, and to unite with ſuch criminals, the Miniſter confeſſes that their crimes and their principles had little or no concern in the real motives and objects of the war. In fact it ſoon appeared, that the purpoſe of the alliance was to diſmember France, while the Allies talked of nothing but morality and religion.

The laſt, and not the leaſt inſiſted on among the charges againſt the French, was, that they declared war firſt. With a willing audience, any nonſenſe is as good as any argument. A declaration of war is not an act of aggreſſion. It rather ſuppoſes an antecedent injury received, and ſatisfaction demanded and refuſed. Whether well founded or not, it aſſumes the character of frankneſs and magnanimity, by announcing the hoſtility it intends, and putting the enemy on his defence. If our ground was good, if the war on our ſide was juſt at any time, it was ſo before February 1793, and our declaration ſhould have preceded theirs. In the conduct of great affairs, the advantages of cunning are very inconſiderable. By provoking a challenge, or driving your opponent to break the peace, you may poſſibly have the law on your ſide in a private quarrel. Between nations this is not policy, but deceit: and a poor deceit too, that deceives nobody.

The real aggressor is he, who refuses satisfaction, and forces his adversary to assault him.

On these grounds, the King's Ministers affirmed, and continue to affirm, that the war was just and necessary. They do not contend that the character of the French Government is improved, or that the war was less just and necessary in 1796 or 1797, than it was originally. Nevertheless they have offered to negotiate, and, as they say, with a sincere intention to make peace. We are then to consider what measures they took to insure success to the negotiation, and for what ostensible reasons they broke it off. The validity of the second will throw a light on the sincerity of the first. The proposition to be believed is, that the object, which they had most at heart in 1796 and 1797, was to establish *a sincere and constant friendship and a reciprocal intercourse* (in the terms of Lord Grenville's project) with an abandoned crew, with *the same individual junto of assassins* *, who were and are incapable of maintaining the relations of peace and amity with any body. It would be useless now to look back to the particulars of Lord Malmesbury's first embassy, except to observe that, by yielding Belgium, of which the French were in possession, and which it was impossible for us to wrest out of their hands, we might have had a tolerable peace in December 1796, and saved the superfluous expence and distress of two campaigns at least, with all their possible consequences. The language of our Government, on that subject, is never to be forgotten. On the 17th of December 1796, Lord Malmesbury says to Monsieur de la Croix, "I should "not deal fairly with you if I hesitated to declare, "in the *outset* of our negotiation, that, on *this* point, "you must entertain no expectation that his Ma-

* Mr. Burke's Third Letter.

"jesty

"jesty will relax, or *ever* consent to see the Nether-
"lands remain a part of France." If the Minister's disposition to peace had been sincere, he would not have made Belgium an insurmountable objection to it. He knew the resolution of the French by their positive answer to Mr. Wickham some months before. He knew that, without giving up Flanders, it was in vain to negotiate, and that peace was not to be had. He knew also, or he ought to have known, that Austria would not support him in his pretension to carry this point. In December 1796, Lord Malmesbury was instructed to make the cession of Belgium an indispensible condition of any treaty with France. In April the preliminaries were signed at Leoben, and Belgium relinquished by the Emperor. For this pretended object, however, Mr. Pitt continues the war, and then *he* also gives it up with all possible indifference. How is any principle or profession of Government to be depended on, when, after so solemn a declaration in the King's name, we see another negotiation solicited in less than six months, and not a word said of this famous *sine quâ non*, from which his Majesty would *never* relax? The intervening pacification, between France and the Emperor, will not account for so rapid a change in the fundamental system professed by our Cabinet. The question was, whether Belgium should remain a part of France, not whether it should be restored to the Emperor. By their peace with him the French acpuired a great accession of strength, as well as liberty of action; and the political objection, on our side, to leaving Belgium in their hands, was infinitely stronger after that peace than before it. Necessity may be pleaded to justify any thing; but where was the wisdom or necessity of committing his Majesty's honour by such a peremptory declaration? A wise Minister takes his ground deliberately, and then he maintains it firmly.

On the 30th of December 1796, Mr. Pitt in-

formed the House of Commons that the King's Ambassador had been dismissed *with every mark of ignominy and insult*; *that a studied insult*, refined and matured by the French Directory, had been offered to his Britannic Majesty; and then he asked whether, "after the King's Minister had been ordered, in "the most insulting manner, to leave the terri- "tories of France, after our propositions had been "slighted, and our Ambassador insulted, were we, "by sending couriers to Paris, to prostrate our- "selves at the feet of a stubborn and supercilious "Government, to do what they require, and to "submit to whatever they may impose? I hope "there is not a hand in his Majesty's councils "which would sign the proposal; that there is not "a heart in this House, who would sanction the "measure; and that there is not an individual "in the British dominions, who would act as the "courier." Such language, whether true or not, may serve to inflame a popular assembly, but is not safe or justifiable in a Minister of State. How can he adhere to it without perpetual war? How can he retract it without everlasting infamy? The French made no apology. They offered no reparation. Yet, in less than six months, when the Minister himself had so degraded the office that no gentleman ought to have accepted of it, the same hand was found to sign, the same heart to sanction, and the same courier to carry the message, exactly to the same parties. Whether this miserable step indicated any thing but a sudden panic, must be determined by the circumstances that preceded, and the conduct that followed it. The hearts of men are not so easily changed. The French peace with the Emperor, the insolvency of the Bank, and the mutinies in the Fleet, were enough to frighten Ministers, as they did the nation. But fear is not the parent of honour and sincerity. Without opening

the negotiation again, Mr. Pitt could not have kept his place. Now a mere offer to put an end to hostilities, while all the causes and all the effects of a rooted hatred remain, can impose on no man. There must be a real disposition to peace, and this must be manifested by a temperate, if not amicable language, and by all the acts of kindness and conciliation, which a state of war will admit of; otherwise the forms of a negotiation avail nothing. Prudent and temperate proceedings, not hasty submissions, prepare the way and dispose the minds of hostile powers to treat with moderation and good faith. On any other footing, a mere pacification, if it could be obtained, would be nothing but a malignant truce, in which the hostile mind would remain, and the preparation for hostility continue. If, while you offer peace in terms, your actions and discourses indicate nothing but suspicion, hatred, and revenge, you may possibly purchase a cessation of arms by concessions and sacrifices; but you leave the enmity entire, and strengthen it against you by the price you pay for a temporary suspension of its effects. To make peace without friendship, unless you could dictate the terms instead of receiving them, is not merely useless, but extremely dangerous; especially with an enemy, who owe you nothing but hatred, who know that you aim at their utter destruction, and who never can believe that the present Ministry can be in earnest in their pacific professions, unless they are the falsest and vilest of mankind, or unless they are reduced to the last extremity. While the negotiation lasted, invectives and abuse against the French Directory went on as usual, or with very little interruption, in the newspapers paid and instructed by our Government. Every man in London knows that these papers speak the language of Ministers, and that they are kept in constant pay, on purpose to prepare the public to adopt the sentiments and

views

views of Government. The French know it as well as we do; and this knowledge governs their opinion of our ſincerity much more than the formal declarations and diplomatic phraſes in uſe among Miniſters.

The ſecond appointment of Lord Malmeſbury, in himſelf unexceptionable, was not calculated to inſpire the French with confidence, or to conciliate their good will. With or without a reaſon, they ſuſpected and diſtruſted him. The Directory ſaid, that "another choice would have augured more favourably for the ſpeedy concluſion of a peace." Lord Grenville ſaid, "that this remark of the Directory was certainly not of a nature to require any answer." The ſtrict right of our Government to chooſe their Ambaſſador is not denied, nor was it diſputed by the French. But, in human dealing, ſtrict right is very often more offenſive than injury, becauſe it furniſhes no regular cauſe of complaint, eſpecially if it be of no real or important uſe to the party that aſſerts it; and ſtill more, if it be harſhly or ſuperciliouſly maintained.

To juſtify the Miniſter in breaking off the negotiation, he is bound to prove, not only that the demands of the French were unjuſt and unreaſonable, for ſuch they might be in articles of no conſequence, but that they could not be granted without ſuch danger, as exceeded the riſk, and outweighed the conſequences of continuing the war.

1. The French Plenipotentiaries objected to the title of *King of France* aſſumed by His Majeſty. They ſaid it was eſſential to the full acknowledgement of their *Republic*, that this regal title ſhould not exiſt any where. Lord Malmeſbury *endeavoured* to make *them feel*, but without ſucceſs, *that it was cavilling for a mere word!* Even pride, if it were rational, would reject ſuch vanities. The King's dignity is real and intrinſic, and wants no ſupport from

any

any thing external to it, much leſs from the ſhadows of departed power.

2. Their ſecond demand was for a reſtitution of the ſhips taken and deſtroyed at Toulon, or an equivalent for them. No ſubject was more talked of in England, or more likely to be introduced, if not inſiſted on by the French. Yet Lord Malmeſbury ſaid *it came upon him unexpectedly*. The argument of the French ſtands thus: "Lord Hood was admitted "into Toulon, and took poſſeſſion of the ſhips, &c. "on the following condition, viz. that, when peace "ſhall be re-eſtabliſhed in France, the ſhips and "forts, which ſhall have been put into the hands of "the Engliſh, ſhall be reſtored to the *French nation*, "in the ſame ſtate they were in, when the inventory "was delivered. By treating with the Republic, "you acknowledge the exiſtence of a competent "government, to which every reſtitution, due to the "French nation, ought to be made. You cannot "pretend that you hold the ſhips taken at Toulon "as a depoſit in truſt for Louis XVIII. when, by "making a perpetual peace with the Republic, you "are yourſelves parties to an act which annihilates "the pretenſions of that perſon. Neither could "even *he* have any claim to the reſtitution, unleſs "he were in poſſeſſion of the Throne. Ships of "war, magazines, &c. are national property, not "within the perſonal ownerſhip of princes, much "leſs removable with their perſons. They are the "fixtures of the State, which even the Sovereign "in poſſeſſion cannot alienate from the defence or "ſervice of the country. We demand the reſtitu-"tion as repreſentatives of the French nation, which "you acknowledge us to be, and preciſely in the "terms of your own engagement." Lord Malmeſbury, without attempting to anſwer the argument, rejects the claim. He ſays "it was *ſo perfectly un-"looked for*, that it was *impoſſible* for him to be pro-

"vided

" vided for it in his instructions, and that they " could not have devised a step more likely to de- " feat the great end of his mission." Lord Grenville says, that these demands were received here *with great surprise*. Now does any man believe that they were so entirely unexpected, or is it any answer to an argument to say, that you are extremely surprised at it? In His Majesty's declaration of the 25th of October, these demands are called *frivolous and offensive, without any solid advantage to France* It is not quite clear that the objection to His Majesty's retaining the title of King of their country, is, on *their* part, *a mere cavil about a word*, whatever it may be on ours. But that the recovery of their ships should not be a solid advantage to them is, to say the least of it, an extravagant proposition.

These, however, were not the difficulties, that put an end to the negotiation. It was not quite desperate, until the French Plenipotentiaries called on Lord Malmesbury to declare, " whether he had or had " not sufficient powers to treat on the principle of " a general restitution of every possession belonging " to them and their allies, which remained in his " Majesty's hands." This demand was accompanied with a specific explanation, which cannot fairly be separated from it, viz. " That an inquiry into " the nature of the discretionary authority confided " in a Minister by no means implied an intention " of requiring him to act up to it, to its utmost " limits." The demand and the explanation must be taken together, and considered as one proposition. To any other Ambassador, the French probably would not have thought it necessary to put such a question. They had not forgotten that, in his former embassy, *at every communication, he was in want of the advice of his Court* *. Whether this

* Delacroix, December 19, 1796.

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was their motive or not, it is evident that, if they had meant by this ſtep to put an end to the negotiation, they would have inſiſted on the queſtion ſimply, without the explanation. Lord Malmeſbury ſays, that "their queſtion went not *to the extent of* "*his full powers*, but to require of him to declare "the nature of his inſtructions." In the firſt place, he anſwers their queſtion in a ſenſe materially different from that, which they attached to it; he then affirms, that the extent of his powers, and the nature of his inſtructions, are one and the ſame thing. But for this he aſſigns no reaſon; nor does he at all ſpecify or intimate what the inconvenience or diſadvantage would have been, if he had given them a direct anſwer in the affirmative, which he might have done in the terms of Lord Grenville's official note of the 17th of June, viz. "That his full "powers included *every* caſe, and gave him the *moſt* "*unlimited authority* to conclude *any* articles, trea-"ties," &c., or in the very terms of their own demand, underſtood according to the explanation, with which it was accompanied. They knew as well as he, that, in the exerciſe and application of his powers, he muſt be governed by his inſtructions, and that he might be as effectually reſtrained, by his inſtructions, from making particular reſtitutions, as he could be by any limitation in his powers. If he had ſaid *Yes*, the negotiation muſt have proceeded, and poſſibly might have ended with ſucceſs. What were the avowed objects that ſtood in the way of it? The Cape and Ceylon; for ſo it is underſtood, though it is not ſo expreſſed. In our declaration of the 25th of October, 1797, it is aſſerted, "that France "has inſiſted that His Majeſty ſhould give up, "without compenſation, and into the hands of his "*enemies*, the neceſſary defences of his poſſeſſions, "and the future ſafeguards of his empire." Now of this Declaration the two firſt articles are palpably

untrue. The queſtion was, not whether Lord Malmeſbury ſhould actually conſent to the reſtitution of all our conqueſts, but whether he had powers to treat to that extent. Such reſtitution is never made until peace is concluded: of courſe it cannot be made to *an enemy*. The places in queſtion, viz. the Cape and Ceylon, are qualified as the *neceſſary defences of His Majeſty's poſſeſſions, and the future ſafeguards of his empire*. If the ſurrender of Plymouth and Portſmouth had been demanded, the aſſertion would have been true and very properly expreſſed. But is it true, or even rational in the way in which it is applied? Does the Miniſter mean to affirm, in the plain and direct ſenſe of the Declaration, that our poſſeſſions in India could not be defended, that our Indian empire was not ſafe, without the Cape and the Dutch ſettlements in Ceylon? The fact is that, while France and Holland had a marine ſufficient to cope with us in the Indian ſeas, and while the French held a powerful eſtabliſhment in the Carnatic, the Britiſh empire was not only defenſible and ſafe, but grew and increaſed beyond the limits of true policy and prudence, and that its danger, if any, aroſe from its unbounded frontier and unmanageable extent. How the acquiſition of the Cape and Ceylon could be a ſecurity againſt that ſort of danger, or why our other poſſeſſions ſhould be defenceleſs without them at any time, and particularly *now*, when the power of France and Holland is annihilated in India, are queſtions, which the writer of the Declararion has not thought fit to meddle with. Nor is it poſſible to conceive a rational argument, by which the affirmative on either of them can be made out. But, if the aſſertion were in any degree true, and if theſe aquiſitions were ever ſo valuable, ſtill you muſt conſider the price you are to pay for them. Are they worth the coſt and charge of a ſingle campaign? Do they pay the expence of their eſtab-

eſtabliſhments, or any part of it? Do we really want theſe places for defence and ſecurity? Are we never to make peace without them? Or is it only a pretence ſet up for the real purpoſe of continuing the war? The Miniſter is bound to ſtate his reaſons for affirming, that the Cape and Ceylon are the neceſſary defences of his Majeſty's poſſeſſions, and the ſafeguards of his empire; or to tell us diſtinctly, what he means by that declaration. A naked aſſertion is ſufficiently anſwered by a contradiction.

If this ſtate of the facts be true, and if theſe conſiderations are valid, the concluſion from them may be quaſhed by power, or denied by prejudice, but cannot be reſiſted in argument;—that the Miniſter has voluntary plunged the nation into this diſaſtrous war, not only without juſtice or neceſſity, but without a provocation, and in the face of ſubmiſſions little ſhort of ſupplication; that, in offering to treat with impious regicides, robbers, and aſſaſſins, he has abandoned what he called the moral principle of the war; that, in offering to renew the intercourſe between England and France, conſidering how France is conſtituted, he has abandoned what he called the fundamental policy of the war; that theſe ſteps were taken not ſeriouſly for their pretended object, but to anſwer other purpoſes; that, if he had been ſincere in deſiring it, he might have had peace long ago on tolerable terms; that the Directory now will never make peace with him, becauſe they cannot truſt him; and that, as long as the war is continued, they will riſe in their demands. The Miniſter will ſay that he is proud of their enmity, and that the diſtruſt of ſuch a foe gives him an additional claim to the confidence of his country; that is, he triumphs in a ſuppoſed character, which, if it really belongs to him, diſqualifies him for ever to be the inſtrument of peace. The French object to him not becauſe he is hoſtile to them, but becauſe they think his conduct has

been treacherous. *Durante bello*, he ought to be their enemy; but he ought not to offer peace with one hand, while, with the other, he foments plots and conſpiracies to overturn their government. Admitting however the merit of this hoſtile character, and forgetting that, as long as it prevails on his own principles, there can be no peace with France or ſettlement of Ireland, has he, after all, a real claim to it? At firſt he denounces immortal hatred to the French, to their principles, to their government, to their exiſtence.

Littora littoribus contraria, fluctibus undas.

He then makes them a cordial offer of perpetual peace, ſincere friendſhip and mutual intercourſe. When that fails, he goes back to his enmity. He then makes them a ſecond tender of his moſt ſincere amity; and now he reverts to his enmity again. *Bellum, pax rurſum.* He reviles and courts the ſame parties alternately, and Parliament vibrates with him.

In what condition this juſt and neceſſary war, if it ever can be ended, will leave us at laſt, may appear doubtful to thoſe, who are not ſtruck with the actual reſult of it. They, who thrive by the preſent diſtreſs, are not likely to be alarmed by future dangers. The vermin feed, and the animal dies. In the laſt five years, the Miniſter has waſted above two hundred millions of money borrowed, beſides all the growing income of the country, and an immenſe arrear of debt unaccounted and unprovided for. He ſet out with an aſſociation of the principal powers of Europe, whom he paid, and of the inferior ſtates, whom he forced to join in the confederacy; and now we have but one friend left, who, *if not actually negotiating with France*, makes no contribution to the war, and muſt ſink, if ſhe is not ſupported by the protection of Great Britain. Is there another power

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in Europe, that would not gladly promote the downfall of England? They ſee us ſtand aloof, commanding the ſea, and apparently in ſafety, encouraging, bribing, or bullying other nations to perſecute and deſtroy one another. On the Continent, the Engliſh Government, and not the French with all their enormities, are conſidered as the original incendiaries and common enemy of mankind. The French, they ſay, plunder the houſe, but the Engliſh ſet it on fire.

The kingdom of Ireland, conſtituting a third of the empire, inſtead of contributing to the common cauſe, is proclaimed to be in a ſtate of open rebellion, and with difficulty kept down by a great army, paid by England, which ought to have been employed againſt France, but which is now in ſuch a ſtate, as *to be formidable to every one, but the enemy.* Specific evidence is unneceſſary. The condition of the army is ſufficient to prove what the condition of the country muſt be, where ſoldiers range at large, not only without civil authority, but without diſcipline. But the groans of Ireland are too diſtant to be heard. Her ſorrows are not ſeen. The dreſſes of the opera are corrected, and all the duties of Chriſtianity are performed.

In England and Scotland the general diſpoſition of the people may be fairly judged of by the means, which are ſaid to be neceſſary to counteract it; an immenſe ſtanding army, barracks in every part of the country, the Bill of Rights ſuſpended, and in effect a military government.

Since the year 1793, the property of the public creditor has loſt about half its marketable value, which the enormous increaſe of the maſs makes it impoſſible it ſhould ever recover. The whole effect of a ſinking fund of four millions, augmented by the fall of public credit, and acting on a capital ſo depreciated, is to keep the 3 per cents. at a fluctuating

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price between 48 and 50. With that prodigious engine of financial power in his hands, the Minister has been fearful of encountering another loan; and now he confesses, that, under the measures of his administration, public credit has been so much impaired, that it has become absolutely necessary to give additional support and security to the national funds, by making the land-tax perpetual, and putting it up to auction in Change Alley.

A few months before payment was stopped at the Bank, any man, who had predicted that event, would have been pitied as a madman, or proscribed as a traitor. The Bank is identified with Government, and, with their connivance, may issue its paper to any unknown amount. An act of Parliament is always ready to shelter them from the demands of their lawful creditors. The only effectual security to the public, against an exorbitant emission of Bank paper, is to be obliged to pay in specie on demand. Take away that restraint, and then what is the Bank, or what may it be, but an instrument of enormous power and fraud in the hands of the Minister?

The final fate of the Funds is involved not only in the instant exigencies of the war, but in the necessities, which the war will entail on the peace. To provide for the establishments, and to pay the interest of the debt, out of any fund, that does not invade the sources of production, is palpably impossible. But a nation, that supplies its income out of its capital, lives on the seed, and then the question is, not whether a great emergency may not demand and justify a great exertion, but how long the ordinary strength can support the extraordinary effort. The demand, that exceeds the ability, is sure to lessen it; that is, the inability increases with the demand.

Against an invasion, all hearts and hands must be united; but why should the French run the risque of an attempt so desperate, if not impracticable, when

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it is plain that they can effectually ruin us without it? *Their* purpoſe is ſufficiently anſwered by the menace; while, on this ſide, the alarm is encouraged as a ſpur to contribution.

The ſuperior ſkill and courage of our officers and ſeamen have been attended, as I truſt they ever will be, with ſucceſſes, that illuſtrate and adorn the naval character of the nation. But the uſe and the luſtre of theſe great events are by no means equal. Unleſs they are wiſely applied to the purpoſes of peace, they may dazzle and miſlead us. What muſt be the reſpective condition of France and England, taken together, and comprehending all circumſtances, when ſuch victories make no impreſſion on the courage and determination, nor even on the prudence of the enemy, and when even the Engliſh are not elated by them? We are maſters of the ocean, while almoſt all the ports of Europe, from the Texel to Venice, are ſhut againſt us. Our fleets may keep the ſea until the ſhips are worn out, while the French predominate on ſhore, and may, if they will, engroſs the trade of the Continent.

This country is now at the utmoſt ſtrain of all its remaining reſources, not for the purpoſe of attempting any vigorous operation againſt a vulnerable enemy, which, if it ſucceeded, might reduce them to reaſonable terms, but, if poſſible, to defend the two iſlands againſt an invaſion, which the enemy may continue to hold over us, with very little effort on their part, or much inconvenience to their affairs, until the nerves and ſinews of England are broken by exertions, unavailing while they laſt for any purpoſe of attack, and impoſſible to be continued. With all the means of ſucceſs, and weapons of victory in his hands, Mr. Pitt has made the French Republic what it is. We have it from an authority, which ſome men ſhould reſpect, that while *the armies and navies of England have been given him without reſtric-*

restriction, and its treasures poured out at his feet, his unprosperous prudence has produced all the effects of the blindest temerity, and finally left this country nothing, but her own naked force, to oppose the imminent danger of falling under the dominion of France *.

This island, untouched by an enemy, is shaken and wasted by its ungenerous efforts to crush a distracted, falling nation; while France, in the midst of horrible convulsions, extends her basis, and lifts her head above the world. Yet the same councils are continued, and the same courses are pursued. Expectation is maintained against experience, and confidence nourished by disappointment.

* Mr. Burke's Third Letter, p. 19, 26, and 164.

FINIS.